

On Thursday, September 20, 2012, at 7:00 pm, a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order. Roll Call. Present: Chair John Stauter, Bob Conklin, Eric Larson, Rene Morris and Steve Munson. Absent: Mike Mellott.

Also present were City Attorney Ron Coplan, City Planner Dustin Wolff, Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

Eric Larson made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 19, 2012 meeting; seconded by Rene Morris. Voting: Ayes – Conklin, Larson, Morris, Munson, and Chair Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Mike Mellott entered the meeting at 7:03 pm.

Superintendent Schmidt reported the City Council approved the Foster Coach Subdivision and Hibbard's fence at Second Street and Third Avenue. Attorney Coplan reported a Special Use Permit was not issued; the right-of-way was vacated on Third Avenue to permit the fence.

J. Herzog & Sons, owners, presented the Final Plat of the Northland Mall Subdivision, 2900 East Lincolnway which divides the plat into two separate lots. Bob Conklin made a motion to recommend to the City Council approval of the Final Plat of Northland Mall Subdivision; seconded by Steve Munson. Voting: Ayes – Conklin, Larson, Mellott, Morris, Munson and Chair Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Ron Coplan recognized the petition filed by Yost Management for Country Lane Apartments. Coplan noted that Mel Schaver is the record property owner. Mel Schaver asked to be included as a petitioner. The transfer of the property is subject to the rezoning. Don Yost made a motion to join Mel Schaver as the record title holder. Mel Schaver assented. Steve Munson made a motion to accept; seconded by Rene Morris. Voting: Ayes – Conklin, Larson, Mellott, Morris, Munson and Chair Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Chair Stauter opened a public hearing at 7:10 pm for the petition from Country Lane Apartments, GP, LLC and Mel Schaver to build a 48 unit development on vacant property located at the southeast corner of West 11th Street and Woodburn Avenue; as well as vacate right-of-way of West Tenth Street from the public alley westward to Woodburn Avenue.

Don Yost, President of Yost Management, stated they have been working with Sterling for a long time. He welcomes advice and comments from Planner Wolff. Yost currently

manages a 76-unit assisted living facility in Sterling, Heritage Woods. Yost has been developing properties in central and southern Illinois for 18 years. Sterling is the most northern of his developments. Yost wants to be a good neighbor. These properties will not be subsidized or Section 8 housing. Proof of income is necessary. No felons or sex offenders will be permitted. The property will be inspected regularly. They prefer to have a manager live in the development.

Jeremy Yost, Vice-President of Yost Management stated that tenants will complete applications. Income will be verified with background and credit checks performed.

Todd Wiltse with Worn Jerabeck Architects stated they attended a concept review meeting with City staff and hope to break ground this fall. This project is in-fill and cohesive with the neighborhood. Single family dwellings in the neighborhood are primarily single-story and these units will also be single story. There will be 96 parking spaces, 2 for each unit. Michelle Dresden, with Worn Jerabek Architects explained there are covered front porches on each of the units. There will be one, two and three bedroom units along with a community center. Units will be constructed of durable materials that will fit in with the neighborhood.

Mark Dwiggins with Upchurch Group has planned the roads. It is currently farm field and there will be easements for water and sewer. Water will be released at a slower rate but not onto 11th Street. Dry detention is planned. It will be grass except during storm events. Shrubs and trees are planned with raised planting beds.

Don Yost promises to be a good neighbor and responsible.

Planner Wolff applauded Yost for a thorough presentation and his cooperation with City staff to rezone this property from an R-1 to R-3 with a Special Use for building and site approval. By and large this is a positive development. It is currently zoned R-1 with some R-2 and R-3 nearby. A Planned Unit Development design gives greater flexibility and a better development. Planner Wolff outlined the facts the Plan Commission findings: 1) permitted use is desirable, 2) it is not detrimental to the neighborhood, 3) no more than 30% of the ground area shall be devoted to uses permitted by the exception, to prevent overcrowding.

Planner Wolff continued with verifying that density is well below the threshold outlined in the zoning code. Setbacks can be flexible in the Planned Unit Development. Ingress and egress are appropriate. Sufficient parking is provided. Sidewalk abuts the curb on parking areas. Wolff suggests widening sidewalks extending sidewalk from the cul-de-sac, along unimproved West Tenth Street to Avenue L, as well as curb and gutter. Although Yost has provided light plan, staff still needs to review. Signage will need to be reviewed. Trash enclosures have been planned, staff needs to determine materials. Wolff commended them for their positive protocol on dead plantings. Building

standards are acceptable. Porches add quality to the development and help to integrate with the neighborhood. This development meets the requirements for an R-3 Special Use. Superintendent Schmidt has worked with Yost, who has accommodated City staff with changes that have been requested.

Chair Stauter stated that publication in the *Daily Gazette* was made, fees were paid, property owners within 150' of the property were notified, and signs were placed on the property for two weeks prior to the hearing.

Chair Stauter asked for comments from the audience.

Chuck Baker, 1009 Avenue L, asked how many young people would be living in the complex. Yost stated they do not discriminate; it depends on the applicants. Baker likes the quiet neighborhood.

Thomas Frank, 1102 West 11th Street stated he has sewer problems and standing water. With no gutters on Woodburn Avenue, he is concerned about increased water. What impact will this have on the schools?

Susie Welch, certified housing expert with IHDA, lives at 1005 Woodburn Avenue. She asked if a needs assessment was done. This will bring 100 to 150 more people to this area. She moved here 10 years ago because she wanted this neighborhood. The extra traffic may jeopardize safety. Basements are wet in the area with high water levels. Most people don't understand or speak English so they did not understand the notice they received. Most residents in this area are property owners. Welch believes these units are not suitable in this neighborhood.

Don Peppers, 1005 Avenue L, is concerned about a detention pond in his back yard. Mark Dwiggins with Upchurch Group explained that it is a dry detention basin. It will only hold water during a storm.

Denise Snow, 1004 Griswold, is concerned about water run-off. Snow commented this development is not geared to elderly. Yost stated they rent to lower income and residents must show proof of income. Snow asked if their taxes will increase because of this development. Families have lived in this neighborhood for years. It is a quiet neighborhood and they want it to stay that way. Yost stated that if the development is approved, they will be a good neighbor and keep it well maintained. He cannot tell how taxes will be affected.

Grant Snow, 1004 Griswold, is concerned about 80 people living across the street from him; it changes the atmosphere.

Tim Kendrick, 1102 Avenue K, asked why this should be R-3 instead of R-1, because everything else is single family. Planner Wolff stated there is R-3 adjacent to this property.

Eric Larson asked if traffic flow has been studied on Avenue L. Planner Wolff stated that it has been evaluated and there is adequate flow.

Eric Larson asked about the cul-de-sac and five double units with no parking. Planner Wolff stated that from the planning aspect, there is no problem with parking in the cul-de-sac, however, the Fire Department has asked to keep that area free of parking.

Chair Stauter asked about the turnover rate in the apartments and plans for curb and gutter, as well as lighting.

Bob Conklen asked for the definition of affordable housing. Yost explained that the government dictates the percentage of median household income. This is affordable housing, not low income. Conklen believes there is enough affordable housing. Planner Wolff stated this will be a better housing stock than is currently available and the ownership structure is not what the Plan Commission is reviewing.

Mike Mellott asked about the curb, gutter, and sidewalk. Mellott also asked about a manager living on-site.

Don Yost remarked that it is a privilege to be here in Sterling. Housing has been approved. The project is expected to cost \$9 million. Don Yost and the architects will be talking with City staff about the curb, gutter, and sidewalk. Don Yost reported they hope to hire a manager from the people living there to cover the office Monday through Friday.

Jeremy Yost reported the usual turnover is 10 units per year. They run about 95% occupied.

Todd Wiltse stated that a lighting plan had been recently submitted but City staff had probably not had time to review it. Signage has been discussed. The trash enclosure will be addressed on the permit drawing. Landscaping will have a one-year warranty. Five units will be constructed for people with mobility problems.

Mark Dwiggins with Upchurch Group explained the dry detention basin will have a drain underneath and backfilled with gravel. Grass will be planted and maintained over the structure.

Don Yost explained that IHDA had approved a similar development for Yost Development in Charleston, Illinois. It is well maintained. Jeremy Yost lives by the 116 unit development in Charleston.

Eric Larson asked if this will be constructed in phases. Jeremy Yost stated that it will be built and turned over for occupancy, all at one time.

Tom Frank asked if local labor will be used for construction. Don Yost stated they try to buy materials locally and expect to hire 70 construction workers.

Chair Stauter closed the public hearing at 8:49 pm.

Mike Mellott thanked the Yosts for their presentation. It's refreshing to have a developer so well prepared.

A written petition was presented opposing the construction of the Country Lane Apartments.

Mike Mellott made a motion to recommend to the City Council rezoning vacant property located at the southwest corner of West 11th Street and Woodburn Avenue from R-1 to R-3 Special Use to develop a 48 unit multi-family duplex development consisting of 24 duplex buildings and one stand alone community building with the following items to be addressed:

- Removal of wheel stops in the parking area; widening the walkway along the parking area by 1 to 2 feet
- Written process outlining the replacement of dead plantings
- Lighting photometric plan with details of lighting fixtures, lamps, poles, and bases
- Sign plan for the development
- Plan details for the trash enclosures illustrating materials and height

The motion was seconded by Eric Larson. Voting: Ayes – Conklin, Larson, Mellott, Morris, Munson, and Chair Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Steve Munson made a motion to table the discussion on dealerships parking on grass and/or right-of-way; seconded by Rene Morris. Voting: Ayes – Conklin, Larson, Mellott, Morris, Munson, and Chair Stauter.

The nominating committee presented John Stauter as Chair and Steve Munson as Vice-Chair. Voting: Ayes – Conklin, Larson, Mellott, Morris, Munson, and Chair Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Planner Wolff explained that he had a presentation on the parking issues with dealerships. Mike Mellott made a motion to revisit the issue; seconded by Steve

Munson. Voting: Ayes – Conklin, Larson, Mellott, Morris, Munson, and Chair Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Planner Wolff displayed photos of vehicles on dealership lots to showcase a special vehicle. Wolff reminded that if all vehicles are showcased, a specific vehicle is no longer special. Setbacks are required for safety and visibility. Setbacks for parking lots are 25' to 40'.

Steve Munson noted that City setbacks are sometimes greater than state requirements. Attorney Coplan noted that auto dealers have requested encroachment on City right-of-way but the state will not permit the encroachment.

The general consensus of the Plan Commission is that if encroachment is allowed, where does it end.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Marie Rombouts
City Clerk